

PAPERS READ.

NOTE ON CTENODAX WILKINSONI, MacL.

BY WILLIAM MACLEAY, F.L.S., &c.

A few days ago I received a communication from Dr. Ramsay, of the Australian Museum, informing me that he had recognized the fish to which I had given the above name, as being very similar to *Tetragonurus Cuvieri*, Risso. My paper was read at the last November Meeting of this Society, and published in Part 4 of Vol. X. of our Proceedings. I therein gave a full description of the fish, as far as visible external characters were concerned, as also a plate representing the fish itself of natural size, and magnified representations of the teeth, scales, &c. I avoided giving any opinion as to the natural affinities of the fish, thinking it best to leave that question to greater authorities on classification than myself. But I certainly was then under the impression that nothing resembling it had ever been described before; the discovery therefore of Dr. Ramsay which I have just mentioned, necessitates my taking the earliest opportunity of correcting my error.

Without a doubt the genus *Tetragonurus* of Risso is identical with my *Ctenodax*: the question of the identity of the species *Cuvieri* of the one genus and *Wilkinsoni* of the other is a matter of minor importance, and can only be ascertained by an examination of both fishes.

Much doubt has always existed as to the proper position of the genus; Cuvier and Valenciennes placing it among the *Mugilidæ*, Lowe among the *Scombridæ*, Müller in the *Notacanthidæ*, and finally Günther among the *Atherinidæ*. The last named position seems to be generally accepted now, but probably only on account of its being the opinion of such a high authority as Dr. Günther. It seems to me an unnatural position, so much so indeed, that in

my search for anything resembling the fish I named *Ctenodax*, it never for a moment occurred to me to look for it among the *Atherinidae*.

But whatever its affinities may be, there can be no doubt of its being a remarkable fish, and the fact that it is found only in the Mediterranean and at the Madeira Islands, and in both places very rarely, and that the only other instance of its existence is the solitary specimen got by Mr. Wilkinson at Lord Howe Island in the Southern Pacific Ocean, are additional peculiarities of much interest.

It is evidently a deep sea fish, its large eyes and very dark coloration are proofs of that. Emery has found the young living in the codfish. (Mittheil. Zool. Stat. Naples, III., p. 283.)

The Lord Howe Island specimen seems to differ from *T. Cuvieri* chiefly in the size of the eye and form of the teeth.